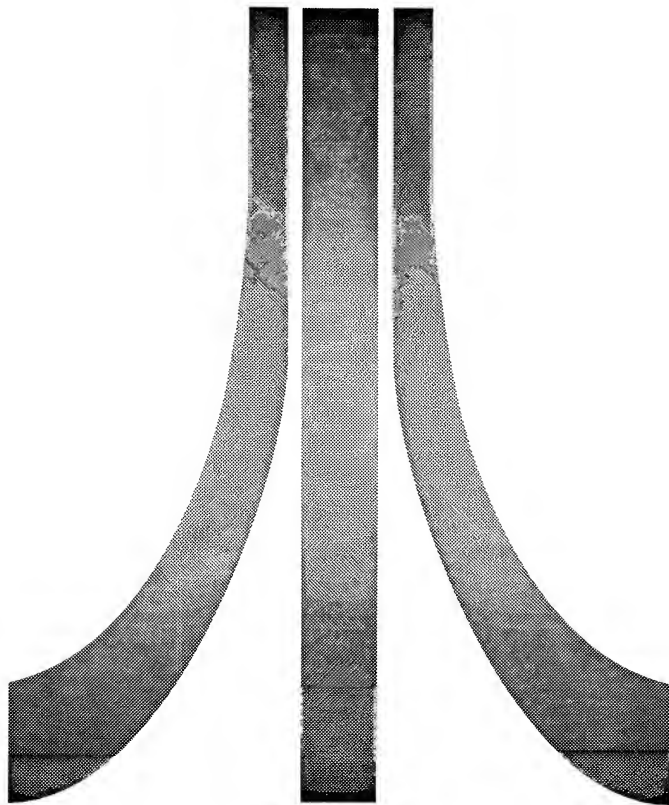


*N*_{orthern} *O*_{hio} *A*_{tari} *H*_{elpers}



Newsnotes

Volume 1, Issue 4

February 1990

The Editor's Corner



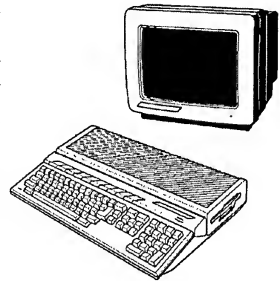
In case you hadn't noticed, there have been quite a number of changes in this issue. First off, let me introduce myself—my name is Kevin Steele, and I am the new Associate Editor for the N.O.A.H. Newsnotes. I'll be contributing my time, when possible, to the writing and layout duties of this newsletter.

This particular issue was an experiment of sorts. It was completely typeset using PageStream 1.8, and printed on a Postscript laserprinter. I took over complete layout duties for this issue to try and prove whether the current version of PageStream was truly "up to the job" of a complex project like a user group newsletter. After PageStream's embarrassing bug-filled adolescence, I had my doubts, as did the Editor. I am pleased to report that PageStream passed this little

test, as I'm sure you will notice when you examine this issue. After three weeks of plugging and pounding away on the program, I did manage to crash the program a few times, and once had a title vanish inexplicably. Despite these few problems, however, the program seems solid.

As the user group continues to grow, so, I hope, will the newsletter. This newsletter is the result of the efforts of a number of talented ST owners, including Rick Gridley, Rick Ortman, Gary Turton, and Doug Novak. However, there is always room for more people to contribute. If there is a game you want to warn the world about, a hardware bargain that has changed the way you use your computer, or just a thought you'd like to share with other ST owners, this newsletter is the perfect vehicle for your message.

Well, I've said enough. I hope that you can add your skills to N.O.A.H.'s pool of talent, and I hope that this user group matures into a valuable resource for Atari owners. With Atari's current attitude towards support, user groups are becoming more and more a vital part of making your computer a valuable tool, as opposed to a expensive toy. Until next month, take care and don't forget to spread the word about Atari Computers! □



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All efforts have been made to present totally accurate information in this newsletter. We assume no responsibility for the actions resulting from someone acting upon any suggestion presented herein.

Archer's Angles

by
Gary "Archer" Turton

This Month's Review:

Bloodwych

Hello again from the Silver Archer. This month we take a dive into The Realm of Bloodwych! Some would say that it is a take-off of Dungeon Master and maybe that's true, but I played AND solved Dungeon Master (long before all the tricks and tips) and am now working on Chaos Strikes Back, and, in my opinion, Bloodwych is better. I am a fanatic D&D player, so I like to have a little more control over what happens in a game, and Bloodwych does just that!

In the game, a mystical order of mages (I thought all mages were mystical) called the Bloodwych have chosen your body to dispose of a real menace who has taken over their Tower. You get to choose three others to help you at this task of wandering through the Castle Bloodwych in search of all these nasties. Sounds like Dungeon Master, you say? Well, this is where the similarities end. You actually get to talk, yell, scold, dismiss, and many other options to the things you will encounter! The graphics are all out awesome! The game is played with one or two (that's right—two!) players. You can communicate with the other adventuring party and even kill them if you wish, although it's better to work together.

The movement and control system of Bloodwych is almost identical to Dungeon Master and any adventure game player will catch on quickly. Bloodwych is a great looking game and a lot fun. The graphics are right up there with the best. I see that the next part to Bloodwych is already out on the shelves, so there is a lot more playing to be done.

Well, that about raps up Bloodwych. if you liked Dungeon Master you'll love it! And speaking of Dungeon Master, I am on the move in Chaos Strikes Back (reviewed in last month's newsletter by Rick Gridley). Look for hints, tricks and tips in a new column starting next month written by Yours Truly called... "On Target." Next month's review...North and South

Until Again, Aluve

The Silver Archer

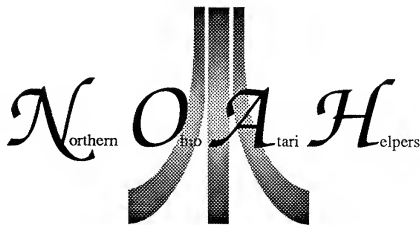


A Special Message From Archer

I would Just like to say that I was very impressed with the turnout of last month's meeting. If it is any indication of the future, I can honestly say that ST support is far from dead! I knew that there were ST users out there, and you all proved me right!

I also would like to thank AAA Video for the support, and a place to hold the meetings. N.O.A.H membership is growing by leaps and bounds and is already beginning to rival some of the bigger groups supporting other computers. I hope that all ST users will find the time to stop in and attend a meeting. We have quite a lot planned in the coming months and you won't want to miss a thing!

Gary "Archer" Turton



Publishing Pointers

Desktop Publishing: What's Right for You?

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Getting Started

So you've been thinking about trying your hand at Desktop Publishing, have you? A lot of people, it seems, have been. Usually, as soon as a person decides they would like to enter the world of desktop publishing, an army of threatening questions appears on the horizon. Which DTP program should you buy? Are you going to need a new printer? How about a scanner? Is a hard disk really necessary? How about extra memory? Where should you start?

The advice I mentioned last month about how to buy a computer applies to this situation as well: find out what it is you are going to want to do with desktop publishing, and then find the software that matches your needs. Simple enough, but how do you find out what your needs are? You may have a general idea, but narrowing it down to specifics can be tough.

Who, What, and Why

Not many people really use desktop publishing software for newsletters. Let's face it, how many newsletter editors are really out there? Not many. So then, what other practical uses are there for desktop publishing software? How you use the software depends a lot on who you are. If you are planning on using DTP software at your place of business, a lot of possible uses crop up. Everything from advertising flyers to invoices can be created with desktop publishing software. If you're a home computing enthusiast, DTP software can spice up everything from Christmas letters to videotape labels. If you belong to a club or organization, DTP software can be used for promotional flyers, and yes, even newsletters.

Which brings us to that very fateful decision—which software package is right for you? If you're planning on just producing a few simple documents, and don't have plans on "making it big" in the desktop publishing business, then I'd recommend Timeworks Desktop Publisher. It is relatively cheap, easy to use, and produces nice output on dot-matrix printers. If your plans are more serious than just "letters and labels," you have two main choices: Calamus or PageStream.

This choice between these two is a bit less clear, and will depend heavily on personal preference. I'll admit a strong bias in this case—my choice goes to PageStream, hands down. If you ever want to take a file to have it professionally typeset, PageStream is really your only choice. PageStream's support of the Postscript page definition language is unrivaled by any other Atari DTP program, and Postscript is what most large typesetting machines require. PageStream allows you to print a Postscript file to disk, creating an ASCII file you can send over a modem to almost any computer at a typesetting bureau. The file can then be printed at laser-standard 300 dpi (dots per inch), 1270 dpi, 2540 dpi, or even higher resolutions! And the nice thing about Postscript is, your file will keep its exact original layout no matter what resolution it's printed at.

If you happen to own the Atari SLM804 Laser Printer, Calamus starts to look better. It has an amazingly fast print time to the Atari Laser, and Calamus' on-screen representation of what your page will look like is the best in the industry. Unfortunately, Calamus' user interface is a nightmare of nested, cryptic icons. You'll find yourself "moused to death" in no time at all. PageStream has a wonderfully easy-to-use interface, but the on-screen representation of your document leaves something to be desired. Ah, life is just full of compromises.

Hardware Requirements

With any of the above programs (Timeworks DTP included), one meg of memory and a hard disk are almost a necessity. With all of the fonts, clip art, and text files necessary to create a document, you'll soon find yourself facing a situation where even two floppy drives can't hold everything you need to even load your

DTP program, let alone save a completed document. A hard drive soon pays for itself in saved time. If you're going to try to accomplish anything more than just fiddling around with a DTP program, I strongly urge you to start pinching pennies for a hard drive.

With the exception of Calamus, a monochrome monitor is not always necessary to run a DTP program, but it can be quite helpful. On-screen representation suffers greatly with a lower-resolution color monitor. A monochrome monitor is one of your cheaper hardware investments, and quite worth it if you plan on doing any amount of desktop publishing or word processing. The monochrome screen is clear, sharp, and very detailed. Of course, the cost of both a hard drive and monochrome monitor may be too much for your budget at first. I'd recommend getting the hard drive first.

A scanner? My personal opinion is, don't bother. You may need some scanned material now and then, but most of the time you can get away with simple clip art. There is an enormous amount of public domain clip art out there, and it's quite easy to find something appropriate. If there is something you absolutely must get a scanned image of, there are several places that will scan your picture for a fee, and send you back your picture and a disk containing your scanned version. It's not always dirt cheap, but it fits the bill nicely when ordinary clip art won't.

Art Programs

Another option for DTP art is to create it yourself with an ST graphics program. Two programs that I highly recommend for desktop publishing are Easy Draw 3.0 and Touch Up, both by Migraph. Easy Draw allows you to create object-oriented art that won't become "grainy" when enlarged, or "muddy" when reduced. Touch Up allows you to edit or create large high-resolution bit-mapped images, such as scanned pictures. Together, these two programs should cover your art-related needs,

provided you have a modicum of talent in this area. If you couldn't draw a stick figure to save your life, I'd recommend that you just stick to clip art.

Things to Come

Well, this has been a very broad coverage of the world of Atari desktop publishing. I'd recommend that you take the time to figure out exactly what it is you wish to accomplish with desktop publishing before you spend any money. Then take the time to research carefully just what advantages each program on the market has to offer. If you take your time and do your homework, your chances of getting the "right" program are far greater. And with the costs of software today, getting it right on the first try has become almost a necessity!

If you have any questions about desktop publishing, please don't hesitate to ask. Next month, I'll cover some of the more important publishing terms you'll need to know. □

Getting it right
on the first try
has almost
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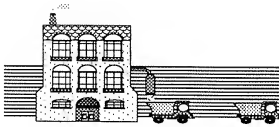
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Writing Services



Rumor Mill

Pittsburgh Atarifest

The following is a press release from PACE:

Announcing the North East ATARifest '90, being Sponsored by PACE (the Pittsburgh Atari Computer Enthusiasts)

Where: Chartiers Valley High School, near Pittsburgh, PA. Located just off I-79 at the Heidelberg / Kerwin Heights exit. Within 15 minutes of the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. Easy access from from the PA Turnpike via Exit #3.

When: April 28th & 29th

Time: Saturday the 28th from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Sunday the 29th from 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Users Groups: Tables are available to any Officially Atari Recognized User's Group for only \$25.00 per table.

Need more Information?: Call the PACE BBS at 412-571-0891 and read the show's message base. Validation is immediate! Or, call 412-843-0628 voice after 5:00pm EST.

If you've ever been to a show that PACE has put on before, you'll know that they are well attended by the best retailers & developers!

(More details on this event will be forwarded when they become available. As this is the closest Atarifest to the Cleveland area yet, you should make your plans to attend now!)

New Syquest Drive

The SQ355, from Syquest Technology, is a brand new low-profile 42-meg removable media drive. The drive, which weighs only 3.1 ounces and is barely one inch high, supports special 3.5 inch cartridges, allowing nearly unlimited storage with a speedy 19ms access time. The drive, which can be equipped with a standard SCSI interface, is priced at \$290.00 in OEM quantities. With an ICD Host adapter, power supply, case, healthy profit margin, etc., it might become available soon for the ST with a guesstimated price range of \$600 to \$800. This drive looks to be a better bargain than the current Syquest drive available on the ST market, which is about the same size as a half-height hard drive, has a 25ms access time, and retails for about \$900 fully ST-ready.

Outline to Support EPS

ISD Recently announced a special conversion package for their new object-based art program, Calamus Outline Art. This software, which will be offered only to registered owners, will convert Outline's CVG format into

Encapsulated Postscript format (EPS). This will allow art created in Outline to be used in PageStream in conjunction with Ultrascript or a Postscript printer, and will also allow Outline clip art to be used with Mac and IBM DTP programs. The converter is said to be completed, and will be ready to ship when Calamus Outline becomes available.

PC Ditto II Problems

Avant Garde is having big problems with their new PC Ditto II IBM emulator. Seems the first batch of boards went out with a better than 90% failure rate! The situation was blamed on a manufacturing problem, and it is being worked on, but it also appears that Mega ST's may not even be able to boot with the board installed, due to a conflict with the blitter chip. This has not led to many happy customers, all of whom have been waiting for many, many months for this hardware device. We'll let you know about further developments.

Stacy Testing

Latest word on the Stacy laptop is not good. Stacy has "partially" passed FCC certification only as a Class A Industrial Device. This means it cannot be sold as a home unit in its current state, although musicians may be able to get their hands on it through certain outlets. Home electronics usually require a

Class C rating, which is actually means that a Class C device emits less electromagnetic emission than a Class A device! Go figure. Anyway, the line of professional musicians interested in the portable is said to include such notable names as Donnie Osmond and Michael Jackson. Think Michael will plug the ST for free? Nah, I didn't think so, either...

WordPerfect News

WordPerfect is currently working on a new release of WordPerfect ST. The new version is supposed to allow WordPerfect to work properly with the Moniterm monitor, as well as with ICD's new hard disk driver software. New features are being added as well, and no decision has been made as to whether this new version will be considered a "maintenance" upgrade, or a whole new version. If the decision is made to make it a new version, it will be "similar or better" to the IBM 4.2 version, according to Word Perfect Corp. No word on whether a 5.0/5.1 version of WordPerfect for the ST will ever be considered, however.

Easy Draw "Touched-Up"

Migraph is currently re-working one of their most popular programs, Easy Draw. The new version will have all the functionality of the current version, 3.0, but will feature a new user interface, one similar to the interface used in Touch-Up, another popular Migraph program. This new version of Easy Draw will go under a different name, and

should be available sometime later this year. No decision yet has been made as to whether this new version will incorporate the features of the Easy Tools accessory for Easy Draw into the main program or not.

Spectre GCR Update

The Spectre GCR Macintosh emulator got off to a very good start, with the final product performing exactly as advertised. That is, with the noted exception of Mega owners, who were faced with a double-whammy of problems—"weak" 74LS373 driver chips in some Mega 2's caused crashes with the cartridge plugged in, and a poorly-shielded internal drive caused read/write errors in Mac mode. The chips can be easily upgraded, and the drive is easily fixed with some foil or other metal shielding, so all in all, even the "big" problems weren't so bad. The current version of the Spectre software is 2.3, with 2.5 "almost ready." Version 2.5 will be a free upgrade to registered owners, and will include better Multifinder support, compatibility with MS Word 3.02, and true numeric keypad emulation.

ST^E Available in Canada

The 1040ST^E, Atari's new "base" ST, is now available in Canada and Europe. The ST^E sports a 4096 color palette, 2 new additional analog joystick ports, SIMM memory module slots allowing easy upgrade to 4 megs, and a new DMA stereo sound system, allowing digitized sound to be produced inde-

pendently of the main CPU for faster, near-CD quality sound. It is not a revolutionary upgrade, but a nice one considering the fact it should retail for approximately the same price as the current 1040ST. The ST^E is currently undergoing FCC testing, which means a projected availability date in the U.S. would be nearly impossible to estimate.

Epyx Folding?

Epyx, the designers of the Lynx game machine for Atari, has laid off most of its work force. Rumors point to the fact that Epyx was late in releasing the Lynx, and Atari had a rather large "penalty clause" in their contract with Epyx. It is rumored that Epyx may be closing altogether. Epyx holds the only development license for the units.

CMI Goes Under

CMI, the maker of a nice accelerator board for the ST, has dropped away from sight and disconnected their phone. A message posted on GENie by an ex-employee of CMI stated that the company had badly misjudged the demand for their board, and that the sudden appearance of other accelerator boards diluted their market share to the point where they could no longer stay in business.

Morand Leaves Atari

The new president of Atari, Mike Morand, has left. He came to Atari leaving his job at AST Research. He was president of Atari for barely six weeks before he quit or was fired. Sadly, the revolving door strikes again. □

STAR COMMAND

Outer Space Adventure/RPG from SSI

review by
Rick Gridley

Star Command, the outer space computer role playing game from SSI has finally made it to the ST. The game has been available in MS-DOS format for a couple of years now. The initial ST version shipped with a virus that did no real harm, however, Electronic Arts, who distribute SSI games were a little "red-faced" about the incident and did a recall on the ST version. Version 1.1, which is clean, is now out and this game fills a big missing void for those of us yearning for a good outer space type RPG.

The game and manual are up to SSI's fine standards. The learning curve of the game is a little steep at first. There is a lot to learn about arming and fitting both your crew and your starship. After a few hours, though, you'll start getting a richer understanding of the numerous weapons/systems and the like for the game.

Upon booting the game for the first time you may shout YEEEECH! The graphics and colors are horrible, in fact it looks like a direct port from a CGA version. However, do not let that fool you. There is a very good game underneath those poor graphics.

In the game, you and your merry band travel the galaxy on various missions from Star Command. All the while you are earning more credits and getting experience to advance both the power of your crew and the upgrading of your spaceship. Pretty much

standard fare as in most CRPG's, but this time it's set in outer space, a very welcome change.

Credits are earned by completing missions, defeating various alien spacecraft, defeating aliens in ground or inside ship combat, scientific exploration, trading and espionage. There are many different ways to earn money but the most rewarding are combat and completing missions. The trading aspect of this game is a very small part and no real money can be made by trading.

There are thousands, and I do mean thousands, of planets to explore throughout the galaxy, which is represented in its full pinwheel shape. You can zoom down on the galactic map right into starsystems and onto individual planets. Planetary

landings by your crew are possible and essential in completing many missions. There are large ground complexes for you to find and explore. These self-map, something like the dungeons in the Phantasie series. (In fact, Winston Douglas Wood, who designed Phantasie, is the designer of this game).

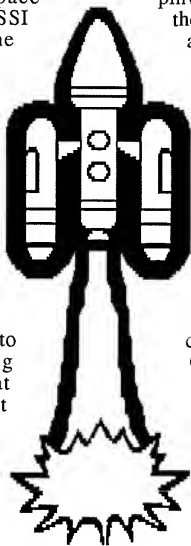
Not all missions are given to you the first time you play the game and some will repeat, others will not during future games, giving Star Command a lot of replay value, something missing from most CRPG's.

So the bottom line, if you love computer role playing games but are getting a little tired of the slaying of evil wizards and dragons, then give Star Command a try. Once you're in the flow this game is the "universe" come to life.

HOT TITLES COMING FOR THE ST

The following titles are all highly recommended games that should arrive soon, some in fact by the time this makes it to print; STARFLIGHT, SIM-CITY, BATTLE OF BRITAIN, POOL of RADIANCE, F19, M1 TANK SIMULATOR and ULTIMA V.

These are all fine titles and I look forward to them all. □



Domestic Titles

Quadralien	Space Station	Codehead Utilities	Hot Wire
Thunderblade	Oblivion	Robo Cop	Darkside
F-16	Powerdrone	Rambo III	Axe Of Rage
Tetra Quest	Obliterator	Paper Boy	Omega
Manhunter New York	California Games	Operation Wolf	Prison
Corruption	Eliminator	Titan	Jug
Manhunter, S.F.	Championship	Barnum And Bailey	Hostage
Exolon	Wrestling	Circus	Devon-Aire
Space Harrier	Q-Ball	Battle Chess	MultiDesk
Platoon	Shufflepuck Cafe	Calendar Maker	G+Plus
Battle Tech	Universe III	STOS Compiler	Talespin
Total Eclipse	Archipelagos	Cyber Print	Renegade
Scenery Disk #9	Ballstix	Red Lightning	Artura
Fiendish Freddy's	Deja Vu, Lost In	Nether World	Speedball
Big Top O'Fun	Vegas	Space Quest III	Chicago 90
Symbols And	Falcon—The Next	World Snooker	The Untouchables
Slogans	Mission Disk	Miami Vice	

European Titles

Grand Prix	Savage	Wicked	Super Wonder Boy
Dominator	Spherical	Phobia	Slayer
Tom And Jerry	Honda RVF	Red Heat	Snoopy
Airborne Ranger	MicroProse Soccer	Kennedy Approach	North And South
Story So Far	Running Man	Thunderbirds	Mindbender
Silkworm	STOS Sprites 600	Bad Dudes vs.	Armada
Leonardo	Vigilante	Dragoninja	Onslaught
Kickoff	Sleeping Gods Lie	Shinobi	Outlands
Astaroth	Gilbert	Gemeni Wing	Prince
Tank Attack	Castle Warrior	Laser Squad	Knight Force
Dark Fusion	APB	Moonwalker	Iron Trackers
Mr. Heli	Passing Shot	Starbreaker	Pictionary
Conflict: Europe	Steel	Ooze	Sporting Triangles
Lancaster	H.A.T.E.	Stormlord	Games Galore
MasterGrand Prix	Dynamite Dux	Switchblade	Winners
Bangkok Knights	Super Quintet	Xenophobe	Tempest
Chambers Of Shaolin	Star Wars Trilogy	Beverly Hills Cop	Future Wars
Toobin'	Twin Worlds	Premier Collection II	Interphase
TinTin On The Moon	1st Person Pinball	First Contact	Hellraider
Time	Turbo Out Run	Ghostbusters II	Blue Angel 69
Galaxy Force	Tom And Jerry II	Skidoo	Chase H.Q.
Fighter Bomber	Asterix	Eskimo Games	Oil Imperium
Hound Of Shadow	Wall Street	Bloodwych	Nevermind
Iron Lord	Austerlitz	Data Disk #1	Continental Circus

Video Repair & Computers™

N.O.A.H. News

Our last meeting on January 30th was a great success! The demonstration of MIDI by Cliff Scott was enlightening for all. Many of the people in attendance were so awed by the music he played that they requested a disk or two of his music. After the meeting he did promise to get some samples to me for distribution to the members. When "Blame It On The Rain" kicked in I saw many a jaw drop to the floor.

Probably the most impressive thing though was his ability to put together most of a complete song in around twenty minutes! I for one have worked many hours at a keyboard with the ST connected and am lucky to get the bass line down for "In a Gadda-Da-Vida" (yes I am old enough to remember that song...note for note). I guess you could say everyone enjoyed it since the meeting was supposed to end at 9 pm and the last people left, forcibly, at around 10:30!! I hope the attendance at this meeting is a sign of good things to come.

This month's demonstration on DTP's is being handled by Kevin Steele. I have seen Kevin's name on local boards for a while but it wasn't until recently that I met him in person. He, like Cliff, uses the ST to support himself and his family. After meeting him, talking with him and seeing a few samples of his work, I boldly asked him to do a demonstration for the group. He graciously agreed and I'm sure I will be writing a glowing review on him in next month's N.O.A.H. Newsnotes.

If anyone wishes to receive the N.O.A.H. Newsnotes by mail for one reason or another, leave E-Mail on any of the support boards listed in this newsletter and we will do our best to get it to you as quickly as possible.

One last thing...anyone wishing to contribute an article, i.e. Review, Commentary, Editorial, etc., either bring it into the store or upload it to the BBS's with a daytime phone number so we can confirm the authenticity. □

A A A Video Manager

ST ERROR CODES

Error description	GEM Error code
=====	=====
OK (no error).....	0
Fundamental error.....	1
Drive not ready.....	2
Unknown command.....	3
CRC error.....	4
Bad request.....	5
Seek error.....	6
Unknown media.....	7
Sector not found.....	8
No paper.....	9
Write fault.....	10
Read fault.....	11
General error.....	12
Write protect.....	13
Media change.....	14
Unknown device.....	15
Bad sectors on format.....	16
Insert other disk.....	17
Invalid function number.....	32
File not found.....	33
Path not found.....	34
No handles left.....	35
Access denied.....	36
Invalid handle.....	37
Insufficient memory.....	39
Invalid memory block address.....	40
Invalid drive specified.....	46
No more files.....	49
Range error.....	64
Internal error.....	65
Invalid program load format.....	66

Those bombs that appear on your screen are error messages from the 68000 micro-processor.

Description	Number of bombs
=====	=====
Reset: Initial PC2.....	1
Bus Error.....	2
Address Error.....	3
Illegal Instruction.....	4
Zero Divide.....	5
CHK Instruction.....	6
TRAPV Instruction.....	7
Privilege Violation.....	8
Trace.....	9
Line 1010 Emulator.....	10
Line 1111 Emulator.....	11
[unassigned, reserved].....	12
[unassigned, reserved].....	13
Format Error.....	14
Uninitialized Interrupt Vector.....	15
[unassigned, reserved].....	16-23
Spurious Interrupt.....	24
Level 1 Interrupt Autovector.....	25
Level 2 Interrupt Autovector.....	26
Level 3 Interrupt Autovector.....	27
Level 4 Interrupt Autovector.....	28
Level 5 Interrupt Autovector.....	29
Level 6 Interrupt Autovector.....	30
Level 7 Interrupt Autovector.....	31
Trap Instruction Vectors.....	32-47
[unassigned, reserved].....	48-63
User Interrupt Vectors.....	64-255

N O A H

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March 1990

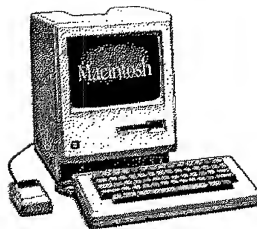


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Join the REVOLUTION™				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Last Day for Newsletter Articles	16	17 St. Patrick's Day
18	19	20 Spring Begins	21	22 N.O.A.H. Meeting	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Spectre GCR

Finally, a Macintosh
"For The Rest Of Us."

by Kevin Steele



I still remember the first time I learned about the Macintosh computer. No it wasn't during the 1984 Superbowl, when Apple Computer aired their famous "Big Brother" commercial. It was an ad in Time magazine proclaiming a new computer, a "computer for the rest of us." I fell in love, a deep, eternal love that lasted until I saw the price tag. Apple, it seems, had a strange concept of what "the rest of us" could afford to pay for a computer. Sadly, I shelved my dream on a recess in the back of my mind labeled NBTE ("Nice, But Too Expensive").

Now, years later, my dream has come true. I have a Mac sitting on my desk, a Macintosh that is compatible with the Mac Plus, running at a speed close to that of a Mac SE, with hard disk access speeds that are faster than a Mac II, and with a screen that is the same size as the Mac Portable. And all of this for a price that I could afford, thanks to Gadgets By Small and the Spectre GCR.

The Spectre GCR has been hailed as everything from "an interesting hack" to a "miracle." It would be highly redundant for me to heap any more praise on this device. Simply put, it performs exactly as advertised. This aspect alone is quite a rarity in the computer world, and almost reason enough to support GBS with your hard-earned dollars. To run the Spectre GCR, you do need an Atari ST. But, you may then ask, why bother to emulate a Macintosh when you've already got a wonderful mouse-based computer? Well, in one word, Software.

The Macintosh found its niche in the computer world, and that niche is desktop publishing and graphics. The Macintosh, from the start, had an integrated graphics and text system, allowing you to cut and paste between nearly any two applications with ease. Need a

graph from a spreadsheet to paste into your word processing document? No problem. The Macintosh also had support for the Postscript printer language from the beginning, meaning that every application running on the Mac could obtain the best output available in the industry. Due to heavy (and mandatory) standardization, Mac applications package show a polish and ease-of-use that is hard to equal.

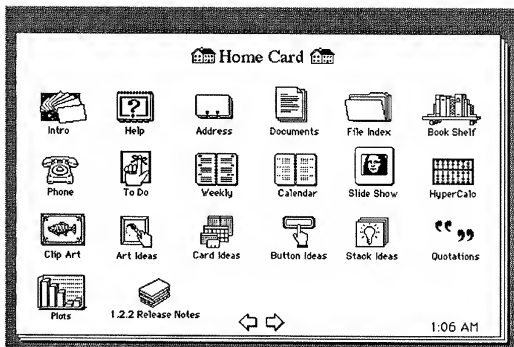
Well, enough reasons for why one should emulate, how good is this emulation? Very good, to be accurate. The Spectre GCR is a bit large, but fits well into the cartridge slot. The cartridge comes with the case removed, since you must first install two Macintosh ROM chips into it first. This is to skirt some very tricky legal issues concerning using the Mac's proprietary operating system. Once you've bought the 128k ROM chips, however, you can do anything you want to them—you bought them, they're yours to play with. You'll also need the latest version of the disk-based part of the operating system, a pair of programs called "System" and "Finder." These are available for the cost of a download from GENie, for the cost of the disks at a Mac User's Group, or for \$50.00 at a Macintosh Dealer (see what I mean about inflated Mac prices?). If you've downloaded the files, you'll need to use a program called "Transverter" (included with the GCR) to transfer the files to a Macintosh-formatted disk. Formatting a Macintosh disk can be accomplished with the Spectre software while in ST mode—since you'll need a Mac disk to boot your pseudo-mac, this is recommended.

Once you've plugged the chips in, closed the case, and plugged the cart in, you must also plug a drive cable into the back of the cartridge and then into the drive port on your ST. This allows the Spectre to read and write

Macintosh disks. Once this is done, you simply turn on your ST and run the special software driver. Your ST will make a “bong” noise like the Mac, the screen will fade, and you will be presented with a little graphic of a smiling Macintosh as your ST loads the system software. I kid you not—this is how the Mac tells you it is functioning properly! After this, the words “Welcome To Macintosh” will appear, followed by the Mac desktop.

From here on, you’re running a Macintosh, not an ST. There are a few keys that have been “re-mapped” on the ST’s keyboard to simulate the Macintosh keyboard, such as using the Control key as a “Command” key, and the Alternate key as a “Option” key. Once you’ve familiarized yourself with the new keys, using the keyboard is simple. Not that you’ll have to use the keyboard for much. The Macintosh is even more mouse-intensive than the ST—not every program has keyboard equivalents for the menu functions, so it’s a good thing mouse emulation is flawless with the GCR.

Think of the Mac’s desktop as “NeoDesk Plus”—you can pull files and programs to the desktop, programs come “pre-installed” so that you can simply double-click on any file generated by a program to load that file and

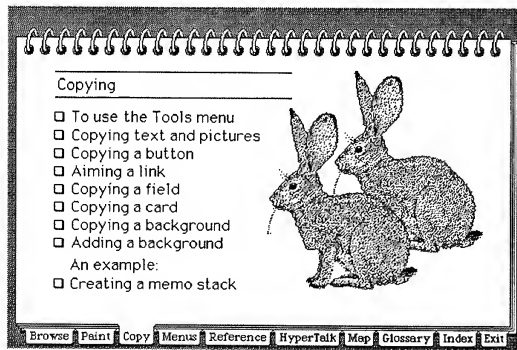


The “Home Card” for Hypercard, one of the most unique Mac programs available

the program. You can set the mouse speed, background pattern, disk cache, cursor blink speed, double-click rate, time/date, and more from the control panel, plus load special “CDEV” programs that add new features to the control panel. You can display files as Icons, Small Icons, or Icons with Text. Filenames on the Macintosh aren’t limited to 8 letters and an extension. Heck, forget extensions—if you want to call a file “Teenage Mutant CDEV’s From Outer Space”, you can.

Well, once you’ve played around in Mac-Land and are ready to get back to ST mode, how do you do it? Simple—pressing Shift-Help on the keyboard will re-boot the computer back into ST mode, and you’re “back in Kansas,” so to speak. The Spectre software is simple to use, intuitive, in operation, and very hard to crash. What more could you want in a program?

With the possible exception of a reason to buy it, that is. If you have no need to run Macintosh software, and the ST meets all of your needs, then the GCR isn’t for you unless you can afford to pay \$450 (\$299 for the GCR plus \$150 for the ROMs) for a plaything. Still, the Spectre GCR is a wonderful device that offers an amazing amount of “bang for your buck”—where else can you get a “computer-in-a-cart” for only \$450? □



A sample “Card” from Hypercard—clicking on almost anything displayed will bring up another card.

Warning:

PROGRAMMING MAY BE
HAZARDOUS TO YOUR
HEALTH!



by Rick Ortman

I was asked by the owner of AAA Video to write an article about programming on the ST, most likely in response to a program I recently wrote and uploaded to a few area bulletin boards. I'm not claiming to be an expert programmer, but I will say this—GFA Basic is about as close to simplified programming as you can get. If you like to program but have found other languages to be too complex, I strongly urge you to try it. I most likely would never have attempted writing Disk-File had it not been for GFA. Surely not in Atari Basic, which I found to be much slower, inadequate, and clumsy to use. GFA is fairly easy to learn and quite powerful! If my opinion seems biased, it is. And for good reason. I've tried my hand at assembly language and Pascal with little success at either. This leaves me with a limited number of choices.

I wrote Disk-File for one reason and one reason only. I wanted to catalog my disks and do it my way. But what started out as a simple project turned into a four month computing marathon. Sleepless nights, 14 hour a day weekends and missed Browns' games (big deal) were the norm. My wife, who already accuses me of being dumber than a box of rocks for spending so much time on this machine, even before I started this project, was ready to toss me and my ST out the window. But my kids I truly feel sorry for. They were the ones who had to witness a well-dressed and clean-shaven man walk into a room on Friday afternoon and crawl out Sunday evening resembling a zombie-like Neanderthal with eyes like fiery hot coals and a back so stiff you could use it for a spring board.

It's quite a unique feeling laboring over a keyboard churning out sub-routine after sub-routine, wondering how in the world four hours could have gone by in the last 30 minutes. Must have something to do with Einstein's theory of time and relativity. But the real dilemma I'm faced with is how do I continue concentrating on my monitor while trying to ignore the overflowing contents of my ashtray along with the odor it produces and at the same time continue the athleticism developed in my younger days by ducking another incoming frying pan?

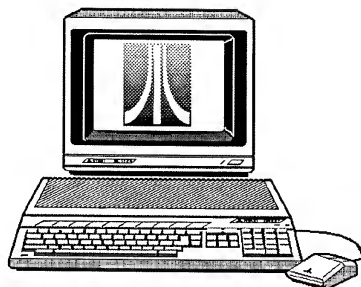
There is one important lesson to be learned from all this though. When your program is finished and the frustration has subsided and your children are thoroughly versed in all the "new" words you've been teaching them the last couple of months, you say to yourself, "you deserve a break today!" And I don't mean McDonald's, either. Open a bottle of wine, leave the ST alone for awhile, and spend some quality time with my family. I could relax on the sofa and talk to my wife, until she takes command of the conversation by informing me of our dire need for a new dishwasher, dryer, or living-room set. Or that one of the kids needs braces. Or, I could watch the boys tear their rooms and limbs apart after they've spent an afternoon session watching mutant turtles and big-time wrestling! I could install the garage door opener I got for Christmas or start one of the countless other chores I've been neglecting or...

You know, if I move real slow I'll bet I can make it back in there without being noticed. Thanks, Sam Tramiel and GFA. If not for you I, too, would be getting ready to visit my mother-in-law. Let's see. What project can I begin now? ☐

AAA Video

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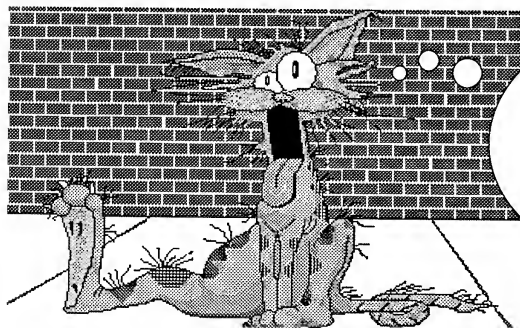


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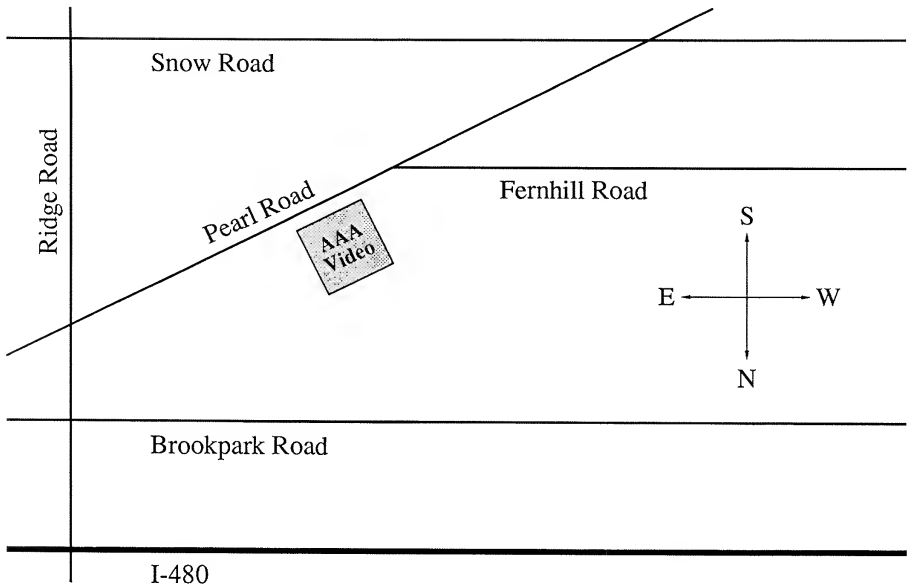
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